

MELDEN LECTURE EKOW YANKAH



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3 pm - 5 pm



HG 1010



Deputization and Privileged White Violence

A “racial reckoning” has focused attention on violence visited upon Black Americans and other minorities. But the focus on police and other state officials ignores the omnipresent threat of White private citizens who have internalized a presumed legal power to forcibly police Black citizens. Rather than merely imagined, this American legal norm has stretched from the country’s founding in our Constitutional tenets, slave patrols, the racist birth of citizen’s arrests laws and lynching until today. Ultimately, part of the meaning of American Whiteness is an illegitimate inheritance of being deputized to police Black people. Iconic deaths of African-Americans such as Trayvon Martin, Ahmaud Arbery and Jordan Neely are emblematic of deputized White violence. Racist deputization is uniquely challenging because such actors do not view themselves as vigilantes but view themselves as supporting the law. Deputization further structures much of American racial life even in the absence of spectacular violence; African-Americans lives are truncated by the awareness that White people claim a power to police them at any time. Lastly, deputization presents two foundational theoretical challenges. First, it illustrates new demands for republican theories of political justification and criminal law which highlight the law’s role in securing equal citizenship. Secondly, it interjects in the important policing abolitionist literature by illustrating why, when some claim the mantle of private deputized power, focusing on policing will not be enough.

Zoom Link:

<http://tinyurl.com/2ar7r8p8>

RSVP

Refreshments will be
provided



Ekow Yankah is the Thomas M. Cooley Professor of Law and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Michigan. His work focuses on questions of political and criminal theory and, particularly, questions of political obligation and justifications of punishment.

If you have any questions, please contact philos@uci.edu